



Fraud Advisory

Social Security Administration
Office of the Inspector General

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Social Security Inspector General Warns Public about Websites Charging Individuals for Social Security Number Applications

Patrick P. O'Carroll, Jr., Inspector General for the Social Security Administration, is warning citizens about Internet-based fraud schemes that mislead consumers into paying fees for the otherwise free Social Security Administration *Application for a Social Security Card* (Form SS-5).

These websites can mislead consumers to believe that they are on the Social Security Administration's own website or a website connected with the Social Security Administration. Because these sites may appear in search engines in response to queries about Social Security cards, it is imperative that the public be vigilant. Once drawn in by one of these websites, consumers are asked to pay fees as high as \$29.99, and may also be subjected to recurring charges. Consumers may also be revealing critical personal information through these transactions, such as Social Security numbers, credit card numbers, and other information that can lead to fraud and identity theft.

Inspector General O'Carroll reminds all citizens that the Social Security Administration provides the Form SS-5 Application free of charge and makes the form available through its official website at www.socialsecurity.gov, its Field Offices, and other authorized locations nationwide. "No one should pay for an application for a Social Security card," said O'Carroll. "SSA does not require that anyone pay for the application itself or to process the application."

Anyone suspecting fraud of this nature, or any fraud, waste or abuse relating to the Social Security Administration is asked to contact the Office of the Inspector General via our website at www.socialsecurity.gov/oig, or via our toll free phone number at 1-800-269-0271 (TTY 1-866-501-2101).

SSA has available more information regarding misleading advertising in its pamphlet [What You Need To Know About Misleading Advertising](#) (03/09) (05-10005).